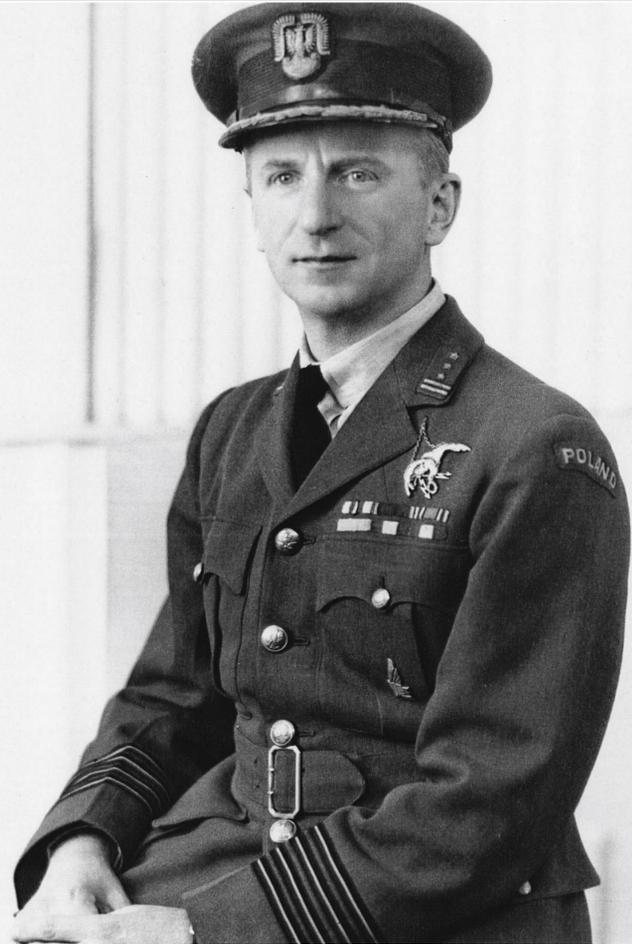


General Stefan Sznuk

(1896-1986)

Aviator, public servant, community leader



To General Sznuk
Zamłota w dniu "Solennym"
High Commissioner
K 107
1960



POLISH SPIRIT

Stefan Sznuk achieved highest merits as air force officer in Poland before World War Two and in Great Britain during it, and as champion of Polish immigration in Canada afterwards.

An aviation pioneer, Stefan Sznuk fought for Imperial Russia in World War One and with the White Russian forces in the Russian Civil War. Having joined the newly-formed Polish Air Force in 1919, he graduated from the General Staff Academy in Warsaw, and eventually was put in charge of all training in the P.A.F., of both flying and ground personnel. At the outbreak of World War Two, ranking Major General, he was named commander of the P.A.F. for the Cracow, and then Lublin district. Interned in Rumania after Poland's fall to the invading Germans and Soviets, he organized daring group escapes of his fellow internees, finally escaping himself to France and England, where he served as Group Captain and Chief Staff Inspector for the reborn Polish Air Force fighting alongside the R.A.F. against the German Luftwaffe. In June 1941, General Sznuk was sent to Canada as head of the Polish Military and Air Mission. For his service in the Battle of Britain and his later all-out contribution to the war effort, he was named Commander of the Order of the British Empire and awarded Poland's highest military honour, the Virtuti Militari, as well as the Polish Cross of Valour and the Gold Cross of Merit with Swords twice.

In Canada after the war, General Sznuk became greatly engaged in the activity of Polish organizations, among other positions serving as Vice-President of the Canadian Polish Congress, responsible for liaison with the Canadian Federal Government and Parliament. He particularly championed the cause of enhancing the quality of Canadian life by bringing over deserving Polish and other immigrants. Among his greatest successes was arranging for the admission of a group of 4,527 Polish veterans, and since these were allowed to immigrate on the condition that they work as farm labourers for two years, he then took great pains to help them integrate into Canadian life. By such actions, he was instrumental in making Canada the new home for numerous Polish scholars, doctors, engineers, other professionals and skilled workers.

General Sznuk was named Officer of the Order of Canada in 1970, and Commander of the Order of Polonia Restituta by the post-communist Polish government.

Photos from top left clockwise:
• General Stefan Sznuk • Mess Dinner in Ottawa, 1960. Photograph with dedication from Air Marshal Campbell / Photo - Hi Art • With Premier Lester B. Pearson, Ottawa, 1961 / Photo - family archive • General S. Sznuk receiving Order of Canada / Photo - Dominion Wide
Other photos - Nina Sparks' archives